



CITY OF VENICE

FLORIDA

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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

April 21, 2016

Mr. Maverick Douglas, Manager
FAA Safety and Standards Branch, AS0-620
P.O. Box 20636
Atlanta, GA 30320-0631

**RE: Parachute Operation Risk Assessment
Venice Municipal Airport (VNC) Venice, Florida**

Dear Mr. Douglas:

Thank you for taking the time today to discuss the direction that the City of Venice (City) should take as we work with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Mr. Christian Schoemig to establish skydiving operations at Venice Municipal Airport (VNC). The purpose of this letter is to respond to your letter dated January 27, 2016, which outlined the results of your "Flight Risk Assessment of a proposed parachute operation at VNC Airport" and provided recommendations for the preparation of a Risk Assessment Mitigation Plan (Plan). The following is an update on the status of each of the recommended mitigation measures:

1. Use Drop Zone One as the Preferred Location for Parachute Operations.

As noted in your letter, the proximity of Drop Zone 1 to the end of Runway 13 and the existing T-hangars, resulted in an initial determination of a potentially high risk hazard. In order to fully-develop a Plan, the City of Venice engaged a consultant to verify whether the initial concept for a Parachute Landing Zone (PLZ) in this area would ultimately be feasible.

VNC currently has a waiting list for hangars. In particular, there is demand for hangars that are larger than VNC's standard 40 to 42-foot t-hangar bays. In addition, grant funding has been secured for design and construction of a building to fulfill that need. Although a preliminary sketch initially caused concern for the City that the feasibility of Drop Zone 1 may be compromised by the imminent construction of this additional T-hangar building (depicted on the ALP as the southernmost future T-hangar, Building 31), we understand from our conversation today that the FAA still believes that this is the best location for a PLZ and the City is proceeding accordingly.

Concurrent with the implementation of Drop Zone 1, VNC believes that risk could potentially be further mitigated by changing Runway 5 to a non-standard (right-hand) traffic pattern; however, we understand that this will require further research and assessment, as well as consultation with users of the airport.

2. Develop formalized written parachute operations procedures and include information for pilots and tenants alike in a document such as an Airport Operations Manual.

The suggested procedures are being incorporated into the PLZ use agreement that is currently being drafted. In addition to any procedures that may be unique to VNC, it is the City's intention to require that skydiving operations follow the Basic Safety Requirements (BSRs) that are published by the United States Parachute Association in the Skydiver's Information Manual.

An update to the Airport Rules and Regulations is also in progress. Once the draft of the Rules and Regulations is finalized, it must be presented to the Venice City Council for approval in order to supersede the current version that was adopted by City of Venice Ordinance 774-79. It is anticipated that the first reading of the ordinance to update the Rules and Regulations will occur in June 2016, with the second reading to follow as soon as possible thereafter.

3. Update the Airport Layout Plan to show designated area(s) for parachute operations on airport property.

This item will be completed following the completion of Item 1 above. Once the update has been made, it will be presented to City Council for approval for official submission to the FAA for the agency's review and approval.

4. Submit new Airport Layout Plan with all applicable information into OE/AAA for a formal airspace review.

The City's consultant is preparing the information necessary for the airspace review. Please provide guidance as to whether this should be submitted in advance of a formal FAA approval of the updated ALP.

5. Conduct Airport Safety Meetings to advise all airport tenants of proposed parachute operations for VNC.

In addition to website and email outreach, VNC staff will schedule safety meetings regarding parachute operations once critical documents and information are in place. It is anticipated that the Venice Aviation Society will provide an outreach opportunity at one or more of their membership meetings, as will the local chapter of the EAA. VNC is also planning to host one or more additional meetings in order to reach tenants and users who might otherwise be missed and will likely request FAA Safety Team assistance.

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6. Recommend tenants incorporate any new procedures/proposed diagrams and other visual aids into each tenant's local training or office orientation programs.

VNC will make this recommendation as part of Item 5, above.

7. Submit all relevant information for parachute operations to the national flight data center, thus allowing updates to applicable flight publications for nationwide dissemination.

Completion of this step is dependent upon completion of previous steps.

8. Recommend VNC develop new written procedures or update current procedures for all personnel utilizing the airport via ground vehicles.

VNC proposes to include an acknowledgement form as part of the airfield badging process, similar to that which was introduced following the commissioning of our new EMAS last month.

9. Provide a statement of the possibility of parachute operations and the drop zone location in the AWOS-3.

VNC has no objection to implementing this suggestion; however, recent feedback from airport users has indicated that when the messages are too long, pilots cease to pay attention to them. VNC will continue to work through how this might best be implemented.

10. Update the Airport Emergency Procedures to include support for parachute operations.

VNC proposes to collaborate and coordinate with first responders to make the necessary updates prior to commencement of skydiving operations.

11. Recommend the current CTAF be changed to a less congested frequency to decrease the probability of communication conflict among all aeronautical users at VNC.

VNC has identified one potential frequency that may be less congested than the current CTAF of 122.725. The City's consultant is investigating further to determine the extent of any benefit that may potentially be gained by implementing the change.

12. Equip the jump airplane with two radios so the pilot can monitor local traffic frequency and Tampa approach frequency at all times during parachute operations.

This mitigation measure would be undertaken by the parachute operator.

13. Update agreements and standard operating procedures (Airport Sponsor/Parachute Operator) when parachute operations exceed 2,000 drops per year or other proponent(s) request use of the drop zone.

VNC is working with the City Attorney's Office and the City's consultant to incorporate language into the Use Agreement for the PLZ that is currently being drafted, which would provide the necessary legal framework to make the updates.

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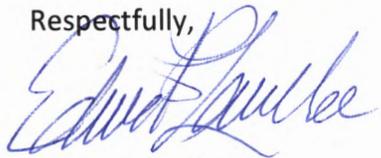
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In order to assist the City of Venice in the further development and implementation of our Parachute Risk Assessment Mitigation Plan, we request that a copy of the checklist for Parachute Operation Risk Assessment, which was prepared during the Flight Risk Assessment team's visit to VNC in December 2015, be provided for the City's review and use.

The City would also like to add that VNC staff have been in communication with the proposed operator, Mr. Schoemig, who has recently confirmed his intention to sublease space from an existing VNC tenant from which to operate his skydiving business. As the sublease agreement must be approved by the City, we requested that the proposed agreement be submitted to the City at his convenience so that it can be reviewed concurrently with the risk mitigation process.

Finally, the City would like to express that the support and guidance that you and your colleagues have provided to the City have been invaluable during this process and are truly appreciated. As you know, since the departure of Christopher Rozansky, Ms. Heather LeDuc, Interim VNC Administrator has been managing airport daily operations. Heather will be the point of contact pending the appointment of a permanent airport administrator. Please do not hesitate to contact Heather or my office if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,



Edward Lavalée, City Manager

cc: Venice City Council

Mr. Steven E. Hicks, Deputy Director, FAA Airports Division, Southern Region

Mr. Bart Vernace, Manager, FAA Orlando Airports District Office

Mr. Kim Davies, Manager, FAA Flight Standards Technical Branch, Southern Region

Mr. Kevin Willis, Manager, FAA Airport Compliance Division

Ms. Rebecca Henry, Assistant Manager, FAA Orlando Airports District Office

Mr. Christian Schoemig, SkyDive Venice

Mr. Len Bramble, Assistant City Manager, City of Venice

Dr. Dave Byers, Quadrex Aviation

Mr. R. David Jackson, Esq., Asst. City Attorney